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VIII.—*On the Ancient Name of Dublin.* By CHARLES HALIDAY, ESQ., M. R. I. A.

Read June 12, 1854.

AT the request of my colleagues in the Commission for Preserving and Improving the Port of Dublin, I undertook, some time since, to collect materials for a history of the harbour, principally with a view to trace the progress of improvement in the navigable channel of the Liffey, and to preserve some record of the various plans proposed, and of the effect of works executed for deepening the river and rendering the port commodious for shipping.

In pursuit of these objects it became necessary to contrast the ancient with the present state of the river and harbour.

It is generally known, that until 1791, when the new Custom House was opened on the north side of the river, there was a custom house and quay at the south-east side of Essex Bridge, where vessels trading to our port discharged their cargoes ; and that previously to 1620 vessels unloaded at Merchant's-quay and Wood-quay : the custom house, or crane, being then opposite to the end of Winetavern-street. Hence it might be inferred, that when vessels ascended the river nearly a mile beyond the wharfs where they are now moored, the channel must have been deeper than at present. But independently of the fact that the ships which formerly traded to the port were not only differently constructed, but were much smaller than those now employed, there are historical incidents which show, that at an early period the Liffey was so shallow near the city, that it presented no great obstacle to predatory incursions from the southern parts of Leinster into Meath.

Unfortunately, however, no map could be found older than the small outline of the city published under the date of 1610, in "Speed's British

Theatre ;" and, as it gives no information respecting the position of the fords or shallow places in any part of the river, it became necessary to seek that information from documents of another kind.

In the State Paper Office, London, there is a Report, made about the year 1590, which very minutely describes the circuit of the city walls, with its other defences, and states that the depth of water in the Liffey, opposite Merchant's-quay and Wood-quay, varied, being from 3 to 6½ feet. This survey, however, only refers to that part of the river fronting the city walls. But among our unpublished Irish records I found two, with more important information respecting the state of the river, and in the preceding century. Apparently, these documents have been hitherto unnoticed. Their contents are not specified in the list of unpublished Statutes made by the Record Commissioners, nor are they to be found in the list printed in the "*Liber Hiberniæ*." The first is, an Ordinance of a Great Council, held in April, 1455, before Thomas Earl of Kildare (Deputy to Richard Duke of York), enacting that the land-holders of the barony of Castleknock and of the Cross of Finglass shall stop all the fords on the Liffey between the bridge of Lucan and the city of Dublin,—the land-owners of the baronies of Balrothery and Coolock, and the Crosses of Lusk and Swords, stopping the fords and shallow places between the bridge of Dublin and the island of Clontarf. The other is an Act of a Parliament held Friday before the Feast of St. Luke, being October in the 34 Hen. VI. This Act recites in French, that many Irish enemies and English rebels, coming by the ford at the "pier" of St. Mary's Abbey, &c. ("*la vade p le pier de Seint Mary Abbay*"), enter Fingal by night and rob and destroy the liege people of the King ; and for remedy enacts, that a wall, 20 perches long and 6 feet high, and also a tower, shall be built at St. Mary's Abbey, to stop the ford there ("*une toure ove une mure del xx perches de longour et vi pees del hautesse soient faitz p le mure de Seint Mary Abbay avantdit*"), and that 140 marks shall be levied on lands in the vicinity to defray the expense of this and similar works. It appears, however, that these measures were not effective, as we find it elsewhere stated, that in 1534, Lord Thomas Fitzgerald (the celebrated Silken Thomas), with a troop of armed men, rode through Dublin, and passing out at Dames Gate, "went over the ford to St. Mary's Abbey ;" some of his adherents, who had besieged the Castle, subsequently effecting their escape by fording the river at the same place.

This decisive evidence of a ford nearly opposite the city, momentarily diverted attention from the immediate subject of investigation, by creating doubt whether the derivation, very generally given, of the ancient name of Dublin might not be erroneous.

Almost without exception, every published History of Dublin asserts that the Irish name, "Bally Ath Cliath," or "The Town on the Ford of Hurdles," originated in peculiarities of the site on which the city was founded, and that it had no reference to a ford or passage across the Liffey.

Stanihurst, writing in 1570, says, that the Irish call Dublin "Bally Ath Cliath, that is, a town planted upon hurdels. For the common opinion is, that the plot upon which the citie is builded hath been a marsh ground, and for that by the art or invention of the first founder, the water could not be voided, he was forced to fasten the quakemire with hurdels, and upon them to build the citie;" and adds: "I heard of some that came of building of houses to this foundation."

Nearly the same derivation is given by Camden, who states that, "the Irish call it the Town on the Ford of Hurdles, for so they think the foundation lies, the ground being soft and quaggy, like Seville in Spain, that is said by Isidore to be so called because it stood upon piles fastened in the ground, which was loose and fenny."

Speed says, that the Irish name was "the Ford of Hurdles, for it is reported that the place being fennish and moorish, when it first began to be builded the foundation was laid upon hurdles."

That great authority on Irish history, Sir James Ware, says it was called, "the town on the Ford of Hurdles, because, being on a marshy or boggy soil, the town was first raised on hurdles."

Harris differs in some degree by stating, that "before the Liffey was embanked by quays, people had access to it by means of hurdles laid on the low marshy parts of the town adjoining the water, from which hurdles it took its name, and not from the foundation of it having been laid on piles or hurdles, as some have asserted."

Whitelaw and Walsh in this, as in many other instances, adopt the words of Harris, without any acknowledgment of their source of information.

O'Halloran is singular in the opinion, that it was the north side of the river which was called "Ath Cliath," and that it communicated with Dublin, which was on the south side, by a ford of hurdles ; and Vallancey asserts that the name was "Bally Lean Cliath," from being built on or near a fishing harbour, where certain weirs made of hurdles were used.

It thus appears, that, with the exception of O'Halloran, these historians concur in ascribing the origin of the name, "Ath Cliath," to some peculiarity in the site of the city, differing on the manner in which hurdles were employed, whether in the foundations of houses, or in roads on the river banks, or in fishing weirs, but agreeing in not tracing the name to any passage across the river ; and that they are correct in one portion of their statement, that is, in asserting that Dublin is built on a marshy soil, was recently placed beyond doubt.

At the close of the last year, in making a large sewer through High-street, Castle-street, Winetavern and Fishamble-streets, the ground was opened to the depth of eight to fourteen feet ; and a section was thereby exposed of the elevated ridge and one side of the hill on which the old city stood.

The work was nearly complete before my attention was directed to it ; but Mr. Neville, the City Engineer, having kindly accompanied me, I had facilities for examining a part of the excavation, and of hearing from him and the contractor for the work an account of its progress.

From about the middle of High-street to the Castle wall, at depths varying from eight to ten feet, the workmen found a stratum of black boggy soil, generally soft, but in some places so compact that one of the labourers asserted that he had used it for fuel during the time he was employed in the work. Above this stratum was found one of leaves and branches, &c., of trees (to which I will presently refer); the stratum immediately under the firm roadway being soft clay or mud, intermingled with shells.

In Fishamble-street, at the depth of twelve to fourteen feet, was found a quantity of squared oak timber, apparently portions of frame-work, with piles four to five feet long ; and in Christ-church-place were found foundations of houses, and below these soft mud mixed with shells, leaves, pieces of trees, and black boggy stuff, or peat.

The stratum of peat terminated near St. Audoen's Church, where blue or

yellow clay (the very general substratum of bogs in Ireland) was found below the roadway, the foundations and vaults of Newgate being discovered a short distance westward—thus marking the portion of High-street, &c., within the city walls.

From proprietors of houses in the same district, I ascertained that nearly similar results had followed excavations for new buildings.

When rebuilding part of the “Irish Woollen Warehouse” in Castle-street, in 1838, the ground was excavated about twenty feet, but foundations so deep did not secure the superstructure, the front wall fell, the stack of chimneys sunk nearly four feet, and ultimately it became necessary to place a frame of timber, with concrete, to build on. In this excavation the workmen found black turf covered by a stratum of leaves, and portions of trees, the upper stratum being soft clay or mud, with shells intermixed.

When rebuilding the “Artist’s Warehouse” in Fishamble-street, it was likewise found necessary to lay the foundations on a frame of timber. The soil had been excavated or pierced with boring rods upwards of thirty feet without touching firm ground. The under stratum was nearly pure black turf, and above it loose clay, the upper stratum being soft mud intermingled with shells; but the shells found here were of cockles and muscles, which appeared to have been opened for food, being probably the refuse of the ancient Fish-shambles, which occupied this site, and from which the street is named. During alterations in the basement of No. 3, High-street, it was ascertained that the house had been built on a frame of timber, and other houses in that and Castle-street were ascertained to have been erected in the same manner. There can be no doubt, therefore, that Dublin, within the old walls, stands on a plot of marshy ground, and that in laying the foundations of houses it is necessary to fix the quagmire with hurdles or frames of timber. Previously, however, to observations on these facts, as connected with the name *Ath Cliath*, the evidence obtained respecting other peculiarities of the site may be stated.

Harris, in his “History of Dublin,” says that the site on which the city was founded was called “*Drom Choll Coill*” (the Brow of the Hazel Wood); and a considerable quantity of hazel-nuts having been found intermingled with the stratum of leaves and portions of trees, already mentioned, I had ten specimens of trees, which had been dug up in different parts of Castle-street excavation,

submitted for the inspection of Professor Allman. Dr. Allman found the fibre of one of these specimens so much injured by lying in the wet bog, or otherwise, that the species of tree to which it belonged could not be determined ; but he ascertained that three of the others were willow, and five, hazel ;—this and the quantity of hazel-nuts found, supplying presumptive evidence that at a remote period a hazel wood grew on this hill, and that Harris, or rather the Irish authority on which he relied, was probably correct in stating that “the Brow of the Hazel Wood” was a name for the ridge of the hill on which Dublin was built.

But as regards the name of the city itself, although these excavations furnished incontrovertible evidence that Stanihurst and others had correctly stated that Dublin is built on a marshy soil, where some security is necessary to the foundations of modern houses, it did not follow that they were equally correct in asserting that the Irish name “Ath Cliath” originated from the use of hurdles in building the city.

“Ath Cliath” is a name of high antiquity. We find it in connexion with transactions anterior to the fifth or sixth century, and we are aware that prior to that period the dwellings of the natives were almost universally constructed of timber, or of timber and wicker-work plastered with clay. As such habitations did not require the firm foundations indispensable for the brick and stone, or high cage-work, houses, of the period when these Histories of Dublin were compiled, is it not doubtful that previously to the sixth century the city could have been named from the use of hurdles in the foundation of houses? Is it not much more probable that the statements of Stanihurst and Ware originated in the very common practice of deriving ancient names from modern facts? The suburbs of the city furnish a remarkable instance of this mode of proceeding. Ringsend is alleged to be so called because the mooring rings for shipping in the Liffey ended there ; the more probable derivation being from the Irish word (Rīn) Rinn, a point or tongue of land, corrupted into ring, as in Ringrone, Ringagonah, Ringhaddy, and other points of land jutting into rivers, or into the sea. Another instance may be found in the alleged origin of the name Pill-lane, which is stated by De Burgo (in his “Hibernia Dominicana”) to be from some fancied connexion with the English Pale ; instead of being from a way leading to “the Pill,” or little harbour of St. Mary’s Abbey,

where the Bradogue river entered the Liffey. Nor should we feel much surprise if Stanihurst, a citizen of Dublin, unacquainted with the Irish language, and knowing nothing of Irish manuscripts, should think that he had sufficient authority for his derivation of the name "Ath Cliath" when he saw the houses around him built on hurdles, or frames of timber ; neither should it excite surprise if Harris, the biographer of King William, knowing that the King's troops, like those of Cromwell under Ludlow, had laid hurdles along the marshy banks of the Shannon, should suppose that similar means had been used to pass along the banks of the Liffey, and that from this "fording of hurdles" the town was named.

But it should not be necessary to resort to conjectures, for, apart from any consideration arising out of the antiquity of the name, or from the fact that the word "Ath" is almost invariably connected with the Irish name for fords of rivers, the "Dinn Seanchus" (one of the oldest of the Irish topographical tracts) distinctly asserts that the city was named from a contiguous ford on the Liffey, which ford was called Ath Cliath, or the Ford of Hurdles, because hurdles were placed there, in the reign of King Mesgedhra, to enable the sheep of Ath-airnè Ailgeascah to pass over the river to Dun Edair, a fortress on Howth.

There are few countries in which an ancient authority of this kind would not be preferred to the surmises of a recent historian, or where such a manuscript would not be considered sufficient to establish an etymology ; but Irish authorities on the early state of Ireland are not so freely received. The chronicles of Bede, Hovenden, William of Malmsbury, or Matthew of Westminster, although burdened with enormous fictions, prodigies, or miracles, are, notwithstanding, implicitly relied on as the groundwork of English history ; while the statements of the greater portion of our Irish annalists are utterly rejected, because these annalists, like the early historians of all nations, embellish narratives of fact with tales of romance, and ascribe to the founders of national royalty some remote and seemingly fabulous origin. I will, therefore, adduce other authorities to corroborate that of the "Dinn Seanchus," at least so far as to show that at a very early period there was an artificial passage across the Liffey at Dublin.

Being without those aids which coins and medals elsewhere supply, it is difficult to discover the precise character of many of our ancient structures. Our early writers are seldom explicit in their descriptions of Irish structures,

and in the present instance we have no information from them what this "Ford of Hurdles" really was. It is probable, however, that it was a passage formed by hurdles and stems of trees, laid on piles of stone, placed at intervals in the stream. Vestiges of such rude structures yet exist, and whether across rivers, swamps, or bogs, are denominated "tochars," or causeways, in contradistinction to the more regular structure, which is termed *droichet*, or bridge. But even in more regular structures hurdles appear to have been used, as Irish writers distinguish between "*droichet*," a bridge of timber or stone, and a "*droichead cleithe*," or bridge of hurdles; and there are circumstances which justify the suggestion that our hurdle bridges were somewhat similar to those which are still used in the East, where, in the words of Dr. Layard in the "*Nineveh Researches*,"—"stakes are firmly fastened together with twigs, forming a long hurdle, reaching from one side of the river to the other; the two ends are laid upon beams resting upon piers on the opposite banks. Both beams and basket-work are kept in their places by heavy stones heaped upon them." And he adds:—"Animals as well as men are able to cross over this frail structure, which swings to and fro, and seems ready to give way at every step." Apparently it was a structure of this kind to which the "Four Masters" refer when recording that "O'Donnell ordered his army to construct a strong hurdle bridge [across the Mourne], which being done, his whole army, both infantry, and cavalry, crossed over;" and,— "They then let the bridge float down the stream, so that their enemies could only view them from the opposite side."

Assuming, therefore, that the "*Ath Cliath*," or Ford of Hurdles, mentioned in the "*Dinn Seanchus*," was a species of bridge, I will proceed to show that the received opinions respecting the first bridge at Dublin are wholly incorrect.

In our published histories it is almost invariably stated that the first bridge at Dublin was built by King John; and his Charter of the 3rd July, 1215, is considered to afford proof of the fact. By that Charter (which greatly increased the privileges conferred by Henry II., and also those given in 1192 by John, when Earl of Morton), the King grants to his citizens of Dublin that they "may make a bridge over the water of the Avenlithe wherever it may appear most expedient for them;"—the inference deduced being, that as there was no similar grant in any preceding charter, there had not been previously any bridge at Dublin; and, as William of Worcester states that in the same year

King John built the first bridge at Bristol (having shortly before sent to France for Isenbert, the architect, to complete the first stone bridge at London), his desire for bridge-building had led to the building of the bridge at Dublin, the chief city of his lordship of Ireland, and the seat of his Bristol colony.

This assumption is, however, easily negatived : in fact, if there had been any reference to records in the Tower of London, which relate to this charter, it never could have been urged.

Amongst the "Close Rolls" of King John are his instructions to the Archbishop of Dublin, dated 1st February, 1215, in which he says:—"The burgesses of Dublin have offered us 200 marks to have their town to farm in fee by charter, with the part of the river which touches us. You may take that fine, or a greater, as shall seem to you most expedient for us, and then they may send for our charter, which we will make as you may advise." A subsequent letter, dated Devizes, the 5th July, shows that the Archbishop was an able negotiator, as he extracted from the citizens 100 marks more than they had offered to the King,—the important document relating to the bridge being dated the 23rd August, 1214, that is, in the year before the charter was granted, or negotiated for. Here the King informs the Archbishop that he has authorized his citizens of Dublin to build a bridge over the water of the Avenlithe, where it shall seem most expedient for the use of the city, and that "they may cause the other bridge over that water, formerly made, to be destroyed if it shall be expedient for their indemnity (indempnitati)," thus incontestably proving that there was a bridge at Dublin prior to the Charter of 1215. Nor is the evidence of this fact confined to a single document. There is in the Tower another charter of King John, confirming a grant to Hugo Hose of land, "at the stone gate near the bridge,"—a document which, through the kindness of Thomas Duffus Hardy, Esq., Keeper of the Tower Records, I had also an opportunity to examine, leaving no doubt respecting the date, which is the 4th June, 1200 ; and further, if it were necessary to add to such evidence, we might refer to the transcript of Urban the Third's Bull in Alan's Register (in the Archiepiscopal Library, Dublin), to show that the bridge existed in 1186; or to the Chartulary of St. Thomas's Abbey, known as Coppinger's Register (which is now in my possession), to show from a grant by Thomas La Martre that the bridge existed in 1177 ; or to other ecclesiastical documents which refer to this bridge at an

earlier date. Nor is it devoid of probability that the bridge thus referred to was one which had been erected by the Danish possessors of Dublin. It must be recollected that, although John permitted the citizens to build a bridge in 1215, we have no evidence that in 1215 the citizens destroyed "the bridge formerly made," or that they built another bridge at that period, although permitted to do so. As yet the assumption that any bridge was built at Dublin during King John's reign rests solely on the fact that permission was then given to destroy one bridge and to build another; whilst we have records to prove that both before and considerably after that period, a bridge at Dublin was called "the Bridge of the Ostmen." The grant by Thomas La Martre in 1177 calls the bridge "the Bridge of the Ostmen." In a grant to Ralph la Hore in 1236, the land is described "in capite pontis Ostmannorum." The name is repeated in a grant to William de Nottingham so late as 1284, which describes a stone tower as being "juxta pontem Ostmannorum;" and as these records also refer to "the gate of the Ostmen," to "the old quarry of the Ostmen" (a veteri quadracio Ostmannorum), &c., there are grounds for supposing that the works so denominated had been executed by the Ostmen, and were not works thus called from proximity to the suburb of Ostmantown. However, having proved from Anglo-Norman documents that there was a bridge at Dublin prior to the year 1200, I will now trace it through native records, and establish for it a much higher antiquity. And here I may observe, that whatever may have been the name of this bridge after the Danes were expelled from Dublin, unquestionably it was previously called "Droichet Dubhghall;" Dubhghall being the name of a man, probably that given by the Irish to the Danish founder of the bridge, as Dubhghall (literally the black foreigner) was a name which they frequently gave to their Danish invaders. They so called one of the Danish chieftains killed at the battle of Clontarf, who is mentioned in the Annals as "Dubhghall son of Amahlaeibh," the brother of Sitric, Danish King of Dublin in 1014. We find that the bridge is thus called in the "Four Masters," where it is stated that "A. D. 1112. A predatory excursion was made by Domhnall, grandson of Lochlan, across Fine-Gall, that is to say, as far as Droichet Dubhghall." And that eminent Irish scholar, Mr. Eugene Curry, has furnished me with extracts from Irish manuscripts in the Library of Trinity College, Dublin, and in the Royal Library of Brussels, from which we can trace this bridge, under the

name of "Droichet Dubhghall," to the commencement of the eleventh century.

In Brussels there is a copy of the "Book of the Danish Wars," containing an account of battles in which the Danes had been engaged. Relating incidents of the celebrated battle of Clontarf in 1014, it states that the confederate army of the Danes having been routed, some of the fugitives were driven into the sea; whilst of the Danes of Dublin who were in the engagement only nine escaped from it, and "the household of Tiege O'Kelly followed these and slew them at the head of the bridge of Ath Cliath, that is Dubhghall's Bridge." The older fragment of the manuscript of the same tract, in Trinity College Library, merely states, "they were overtaken and slain at the head of the bridge of Ath Cliath;" but "the Book of Leinster" recording the death of Maelmordha, on his retreat from the battle, expressly states that he was drowned at "Dubhghall's Bridge."

Beyond this period, that is, 150 years prior to the Anglo-Norman invasion, we cannot produce distinct evidence of "a droichet," or bridge, at Dublin, although it is highly probable that there was, previously, a regular structure of that kind across the Liffey. We know that these Northmen, who had only established their sovereignty on the sea coasts of Ireland, had subjugated all England, and held frequent intercourse with it. Godfred II., who was King of Dublin in 922, was also King of Northumberland; and the "Saxon Chronicle" states that Anlaf (the Danish King of Dublin) after his defeat at Brunanburg, by Athelstan in 937, fled with his Northmen in "their nailed barks over the deep waters, Dublin to seek." We might, therefore, infer that these Danish or Norwegian Kings, having territory on both sides of the Liffey, did not omit to establish at Dublin that mode of crossing rivers which they must have seen in England. For, although it may be doubtful if the Romans ever erected a stone bridge in Britain, it is certain that they erected many of wood,—the material most commonly used until the close of the twelfth century, when St. Benedict founded his order of "Pontifices," or stone bridge-builders. Yet, if we cannot find the term "bridge" applied to any structure at Dublin prior to the year 1014, we have no difficulty in finding evidence that a roadway had been formed across the river before that period. Again, referring to the "Annals of the Four Masters," we find that, in the year 1000, "the Tochar," or causeway of Ath Luain (that is, Athlone), was made by Maelseachlainn, son of Domhnall,

and by Cathal, son of Conchobhar ; and that they made the tochar or causeway of Ath Liag (Lanesborough) in the same year, each carrying his portion of the work to the middle of the Shannon. This is referred to as illustrating the statement of the "Chronicon Scotorum" that in the year 1001, King Malachy made a tochar at Ath Cliath (Dublin) until it reached "one half of the river ;" apparently the custom being, that when a tidal or non-tidal river divided the territories of Irish kings, each claimed one half of it, and only built to the middle of the stream ; and to this (irrespective of the division of Ireland made by Mogh Nuadhat and Conn) we may attribute that the earliest charters of Dublin only granted to the citizens the southern half of the Liffey, being that within the kingdom of Leinster (Strongbow's portion with Mac Morogh's daughter), the other half of the river being in the territory of Meath.

It is not necessary to the present inquiry to ascertain the precise position of this tochar of A.D. 1001. Whether it had been made at the ford opposite St. Mary's Abbey, and was the origin of the well-known tradition of an ancient communication between that Abbey and Christ Church,—(St. Mary's, on the north bank of the Liffey, alleged to have been built in 948 ; and the arches under Christ Church, built on the south bank, at as early a date) ;—or whether this tochar was at the "Ath Cro," or "Bloody Ford," and led to the old "Bothyr," or road, now anglicised into "Stoney Batter ;" or had occupied the site of that which long continued to be called the "Old Bridge,"—although the Old Bridge had been destroyed in 1314, its substitute swept away in 1385, and at least twice subsequently rebuilt,—it is sufficient to have traced, so far, the existence of an artificial passage across the Liffey at Dublin ; but between this link and the next by which we should form our chain of corroborative evidence, there is a long interval. We have records of bridges over small rivers in Ireland in 924, and are told that a king of Ulster was celebrated for bridge-building in 739 ; but we cannot refer to any incident connected with the existence of a bridge, or tochar, at Dublin, between the commencement of the fifth century and the close of the tenth. This, however, is an interval in which we may safely rely on circumstantial evidence. It was within this period that Ireland was celebrated as the school of ecclesiastical learning. It was the Island of Saints ; and from it, ecclesiastics travelled throughout Europe to teach ; and to it, European scholars journeyed to learn. We may, therefore, rest assured, that whatever of art or

science was then known elsewhere, was not unknown in Ireland ; and that when there was sufficient art to build churches and round towers, to construct "nailed barks," and to supply all that ships required for long voyages, there was mechanical art sufficient to make any needful passage across such a river as the Liffey. It was at the close of this period, that an Irish saint (Mowena) had visited Croyland, celebrated for the most curiously constructed bridge in England ; and at the commencement of it, that Irish traders, in Irish ships, had carried St. Patrick and others as slaves into Ireland out of Gaul, then covered with remains of Roman art. Passing, therefore, over this interval, and again taking up our chain of evidence at the fifth century, we find that between this period and the first century there must have been a roadway across the Liffey. For this highly interesting evidence I am indebted to the research of my friend Dr. Petrie for his "History and Antiquities of Tara."

The Ordnance Survey of Ireland having presented the long desired opportunity for making a correct plan of the remains of Tara, the existing vestiges were laid down, according to accurate measurement, on a map by Captain Bordes of the Royal Engineers, who had charge of the Survey. While this was in progress, Dr. Petrie and Dr. O'Donovan, who were then attached to the Survey, made a careful search in all ancient Irish manuscripts accessible, for such documents of a descriptive or historical character as would tend to identify or illustrate the existing vestiges. The result was eminently successful in corroborating the statements of our early writers. Works, the descriptions of which had been previously regarded as mere bardic fictions, were traced with a degree of accuracy, which, so far, placed beyond doubt the truthfulness of these ancient authorities. There is, however, only one of these identifications to which it will be necessary, for the present inquiry, that I should refer.

In our oldest manuscripts it is stated that, in the first century, Ireland was intersected by five great roads, leading from different provinces, or petty kingdoms, to the seat of supreme royalty at Tara. Of these "slighes," or roads, the "Slighe Cualann" was one traced with the greatest apparent certainty by the Ordnance Survey. It struck off from the Fan-na-g-Carbad, or "Slope of the Chariots," and led *via* Ratoath and Dublin into Cualann ; a district extending from Dalkey, southwards and westwards, and part of which, including Powerscourt, is designated in Anglo-Norman records, as Fercullen, or "the Territory of the

men of Cualann." This road, consequently, must have crossed the Liffey; and that it did so near Dublin, is confirmed by the fact, that the passage across the river there, is frequently termed "Ath Cliath Cualann." Now it is impossible that a roadway for any general purpose could be carried across a river like the Liffey, subject to winter floods and the daily flow of the tide, unless that roadway was formed by a bridge, tochar, or structure of some kind raised above the ordinary high-water mark. Such a structure, formed of timber or hurdles, the only material then used for that purpose, was doubtless that which, in the figurative language of the time, was termed an "Ath Cliath" or Ford of Hurdles.

Adding this evidence of a passage across the river to the distinct statements of the Dinn Seanchus, I hope I may appear justified in the opinion I now venture to express, that those great authorities on Irish history—Stanihurst, Camden, and Ware—are incorrect in asserting that Dublin was called "Bally Ath Cliath," because the ancient city was built on a marshy soil, where hurdles were necessary to secure the foundations of houses; and that in this, as in other cases, we may more safely rely on Irish annalists than on modern historians, and assert that the name "Ath Cliath" originated from a passage across the Liffey, that passage being made by hurdles, so laid as to form an artificial ford or bridge. I am aware that there was a ford on the Shannon, which also was called "Ath Cliath;" but I am likewise aware that Irish manuscripts expressly state that it was so called, not from hurdles being placed (as they were at Dublin) in order to form a passage, but because stakes were driven in the river, and hurdles placed as a barrier to prevent an enemy from crossing,—thus disclosing a remarkable coincidence in the mode of defensive warfare practised by the ancient inhabitants of Ireland and of Britain, Cæsar informing us that the Britons, in a similar manner, had endeavoured to prevent his army from crossing the Thames, by driving stakes in the river and on its banks, and thereby obstructing the ford. And it is further suggestive of similarity of habit with a considerable amount of mechanical art (also apparent in our huge monuments of stone), that in the first century, when the Fan-na-g-Carbad, or "Slope of the Chariots" existed at Tara, Cæsar was describing his contests with the Britons in their chariots constructed for war.

If this attempt to correct erroneous opinions respecting the origin of the ancient Irish name of Dublin should lead to further investigation by others more

competent for the task, and having more leisure for it, much of my object will be attained. I know that there are in various depositories and libraries, in the United Kingdom and on the Continent, unpublished and almost unnoticed records and manuscripts relating to Ireland. And I feel confident that an examination of their contents would tend to remove many obscurities in the early history of our country; might correct many opinions respecting its aboriginal inhabitants and their connexion with other nations; and, conjointly with the discoveries daily made, of long buried monuments, might enable us to verify many of those statements, which continue to be viewed with suspicion, because as yet they rest solely on the authority of Irish annalists and bards.